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(71)(72) Applicant and Inventor: LANDEGREN, Ulf [SE/SE]; Uppsala University, Dept. of Medical Genetics, Biomedical Center, P.O. Box 589, S–751 23 Uppsala (SE).

(74) Agents: PENNANT, Pyers et al.; Stevens Hewlett & Perkins, 1 Serjeants' Inn, Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1NT (GB).

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(54) Title: ROLLING CIRCLE REPLICATION OF PADLOCK PROBES

(57) Abstract

Rolling circle replication of a padlock primer is inhibited when it is hybridised to a target nucleic acid that is long or circular. The invention provides methods of addressing this problem including cutting the target nucleic acid near or preferably at the site which hybridises with the padlock probe, whereby a 3'-end of the cut target nucleic acid acts as a primer for rolling circle replication of the padlock probe. Also included is a method for assaying for a polyepitopic target by the use of two affinity probes each carrying an oligonucleotide tag and of padlock probe for rolling circle replication in association with the two affinity probes.

ROLLING CIRCLE REPLICATION OF PADLOCK PROBES

5   **Introduction**

Various methods are in use for detecting single or multiple
nucleotide variations in DNA or RNA samples (1,2). Most methods depend
on amplification of the target sequence prior to analysis, commonly by
PCR. Thereby, valuable information on the localisation of allelic variants is

10   lost. Information on the localisation of sequence variants is important e.g.
to determine haplotypes of several variable sequences along
chromosomes in the study of inherited disorders; to determine if two
mutations in a gene are present in the same copy or in alternate alleles; or
to study replication timing of alleles in the cell cycle (3) or the distribution of

15   mutant cells in a malignant tissue. Single nucleotide discrimination in
single copy gene sequences *in situ* is presently not possible, but it has
recently been shown to work efficiently on repeated sequences using
padlock probes (4), a new class of gene diagnostic probe molecules (5).
These are linear oligonucleotides with target complementary sequences at

20   the ends and a non-target complementary sequence in between. When
hybridised to the correct target DNA sequence, the two ends are brought
together, head to tail, and can be joined by a DNA ligase. As a
consequence of the helical nature of double stranded DNA the resulting
circular probe molecule is catenated to the target DNA strand. This probe

25   design has some important features. First, the requirement for two
independent oligonucleotide hybridisation events in order for ligation to
occur provides sufficient specificity to detect single-copy genes in the
complexity of a complete human genome (6-8). Second, ligation is greatly
inhibited by mismatches at the ligation junction, allowing single nucleotide

30   distinction in the target sequence (4,8-10). Third as the topological link
between probe and target DNA strands is independent of hybridisation

stability, denaturing washes can be applied reducing non-sp cific hybridisation (5). Fourth, unlike PCR or LCR, only intramolecular interactions probe reactions are scored, avoiding problems of simultaneously applying large sets of probes (11). Whereas combinations

5   of many pairs of PCR primers leads to a rapidly increasing risk of spurious amplification products, formed between any combinations of primers, this is not the case for padlock probes. Lastly, the joining of the probe ends creates a new class of molecules, not present before the reaction; these circular molecules can be amplified in a rolling circle replication reaction to

10 detect ligated probes (12,13).

Amplification of a circular nucleic acid molecule free in solution by a rolling circle replication reaction may be achieved simply by hybridising a primer to the circular nucleic acid and providing a supply of nucleotides and a polymerase enzyme. However, problems may arise

15 when the circular nucleic acid is not free in solution. In the particular case of a padlock primer which is catenated to its target, it might reasonably be expected that the target would inhibit a rolling circle replication reaction. In previously unpublished work leading up to the present invention, the inventors have demonstrated that such inhibition does indeed take place

20 (18). They found that, if the target is circular, for example the circular 7kbM13 genome, then rolling circle replication of a padlock primer catenated to the target is effectively prevented. Where a target is linear, it is possible in principle for a padlock formed thereon to slide along the target molecule and off the end, thereby becoming free in solution and

25 available for amplification by a rolling circle replication reaction. Alternatively, the target sequence, 3' of the site of binding by the padlock probe, may be digested by exonucleolysis, allowing the remaining target strand to prime rolling circle replication. In practice, the inventors have found that this sliding and uncoupling effect is possible to a limited extent

30 even with long linear targets. Thus, converting the circular 7kbM13 genome by restriction at a single site into a linear 7kb nucleic acid molecule

with 3.5kb upstream and 3.5kb downstream of the hybridisation site of the padlock primer, limited amplification of the padlock primer was possible by rolling circle replication. But where the target nucleic acid is substantially shorter, e.g. a few tens or hundreds of bases, rolling circle replication of a

5   padlock primer formed thereon is much more rapid and efficient.

For *in situ* detection of a target sequence in a metaphase chromosome, the target sequence is likely to be part of a target molecule so long as to inhibit amplification by rolling circle replication of a padlock primer formed thereon. This problem may be addressed by linearising or

10   shortening the target molecule. Thus a target molecule might be linearised by restriction digestion before the addition of padlock probes. Alternatively, a primer extension reaction might be performed to generate a relatively short nucleic acid molecule suitable as a target for padlock probe recognition. For *in situ* detection in metaphase chromosomes, these two

15   methods are subject to the disadvantage that they risk causing loss of target DNA and thereby loss of detection.

The Invention

In one aspect of the present invention, this problem is

20   addressed by cutting the target molecule before, during or after target recognition and probe circularisation. In this aspect the invention provides a method of detecting a target sequence of a target nucleic acid which method comprises the steps of:-

i)   providing a padlock probe for the target sequence,

25   ii)   forming a hybrid of the padlock probe with the target nucleic acid, and circularising the padlock probe,

iii)   cutting the target nucleic acid at or near the target sequence, this step iii) being performed before, during or after step ii), and

iv)   effecting rolling circle replication of the padlock probe.

30   The target nucleic acid may in principle be DNA or RNA. The method of the invention is likely to be useful particularly when the target

nucleic acid is a long-chain or circular molecule. The target sequence is of sufficient length to hybridise with the two ends of the padlock probe. The method of the invention is expected to be particularly useful for localised detection of single-copy gene sequences and for distinction among

5   sequence variants in microscopic specimens, and for probes immobilised in one or two dimensional arrays.

The padlock probe has a 5'-end sequence and 3'-end sequence complementary to the target sequence; so that it can be circularised e.g. by ligation when hybridised to the target sequence.

10   Precise complementarity is not necessarily required, but there must be sufficient complementarity to permit hybridisation of the padlock probe to the target sequence, and circularisation of the padlock probe by ligation. It is in principle possible to provide a padlock probe in two parts, in which case two ligation reactions are required to achieve circularisation. The size

15   of the padlock probe needs to be suitable to permit amplification by a rolling circle replication reaction, preferably at least about 25 nt and not more than 150 – 200 nt, though larger probes are possible particularly when used with a polymerase not having exonuclease activity, especially 5' to 3' exonuclease activity.

20   Step ii) of the method involves forming a hybrid of the padlock probe with the target sequence of the target nucleic acid, and circularising the padlock probe. These steps may be carried out under conventional conditions. If the target nucleic acid sample under investigation does not contain the target sequence, then hybridisation and circularisation of the

25   padlock probe occur not at all or only to a limited extent.

In step iii) of the method, the target nucleic acid is cut at or near the target sequence. This cut may be made by means well known in the art. Although the distance of the restriction site from the target sequence may be substantial, e.g. 3.5kb as above or even greater, it is

30   preferably within a few bases or a few tens of bases of the target sequence.

Thus the target nucleic acid may be linearised by restriction digestion before the addition of a padlock probe. Alternatively, a primer extension reaction may be performed to generate a relatively short nucleic acid molecule suitable as a target for padlock probe recognition. For *in situ* detection in metaphase chromosomes, these two methods are subject to the disadvantage that they risk causing loss of target DNA and thereby loss of detection. Preferably therefore step iii) is performed by subjecting the hybrid to restriction thereby cutting the target nucleic acid at or near the target sequence but without cutting the circularised padlock probe.

In step iv), the padlock probe is amplified by a rolling circle replication reaction. This usually requires a primer to hybridise to the circularised padlock probe, a supply of nucleotides and a polymerase enzyme, and may be effected by means well known in the art. A preferred polymerase enzyme is φ29 DNA polymerase which has high processivity and 3'-exonuclease activity.

Therefore when a target sequence is cleaved 3' of where a padlock probe has bound, then any non-basepaired nucleotides may be removed by the polymerase, until a 3' end basepaired to the padlock probe is obtained, whereupon rolling circle replication (RCR) can be initiated without the addition of an external primer, and ensuring that the RCR product is continuous with the target sequence. Such cleavage can be accomplished by hybridising an oligonucleotide to the target sequence downstream of where the probe has bound. The sequence can then be cleaved using a restriction enzyme whose recognition sequence has been rendered double stranded by this hybridisation. Alternatively, a hairpin oligonucleotide can be used, having one double stranded end containing a recognition sequence for a type IIS enzyme, e.g. FokI, and another end hybridising to the target sequence 3' of where the padlock probe has bound.

If the padlock probe hybridises to the target sequence across a restriction site, then the padlock can be protected e.g. by being modified

with phosphorothioates, allowing the target sequence to be cleaved without opening the padlock.

If the target nucleic acid is RNA, and is restricted at a site now within the target sequence, then a 3'-end capable of initiating rolling
5 circle replication of the padlock primer can be obtained by RNase H digestion.

According to a preferred method, in step iii) the target nucleic acid is cut within the target sequence. An advantage of this method is that the 3'-end of the target sequence then constitutes a primer by means of
10 which rolling circle replication of the padlock probe may be effected in step iv). Thereby the rolling circle replication product formed is contiguous with the target sequence.

To achieve this, use is preferably made of a type IIS enzyme. (Type IIS enzymes are sometimes referred to as class IIS enzymes or
15 Type IV enzymes.). Type IIS restriction endonucleases are described in the literature (14,15). These enzymes interact with two discrete sites on double-stranded DNA; a recognition site which is 4-7bp long, and a cleavage site usually 1-20bp away from the recognition site. One such type IIS enzyme is the FokI restriction endonuclease (16,17) which
20 recognises a double-stranded 5'-GGATG-3' site and cuts at the 9th and 13th nucleotides downstream from the 5'-3' and 3'-5' strands respectively. When using FokI with ssDNA and oligonucleotides, cutting is observed at the 9th or 13th nucleotide from the recognition site. Cutting occurs independent of whether a double stranded region between the recognition
25 and cut sites is perfectly complementary or not.

To use a type IIS enzyme in the above method, a specially designed padlock probe is required, and this forms another aspect of the invention. In this aspect there is provided an oligonucleotide suitable for use as a padlock probe for a target nucleic acid sequence, which
30 oligonucleotide has 5'-end and 3'-end sequences complementary to the target sequence; a first site for recognition by a type IIS enzyme; and a

second site where at least one nucleotide residue and/or internucleotide bond is modified to protect the oligonucleotide from restriction by the type IIS enzyme.

The first site for recognition by the type IIS enzyme needs to
5   be positioned on the padlock probe so that the enzyme cuts the target nucleic acid sequence. And the second site needs to be positioned on the padlock probe in relation to the first site so as to protect the padlock probe from being cut by the type IIS enzyme. The relative positions of the first and second sites, in relation to the 5'-end and 3'-end sequences, depend
10   on the particular type IIS enzyme to be used. The modification at the second site may also depend on the particular type IIS enzyme to be used. For example, when a FokI enzyme is to be used, and similarly for the type II enzyme HincII, phosphorothioate internucleotide bonds are effective to prevent cleavage of the padlock probe.

15   In the method of the invention, the padlock probe is hybridised to the target sequence and circularised. Then the padlock probe is made double-stranded at the first site for recognition by a type IIS enzyme. Then the enzyme is added and used to cleave the target sequence. Then conditions are adjusted to so as to cause a cleaved
20   fragment of the target sequence to act as a primer to initiate rolling circle replication of the padlock probe. Either (or neither) of the padlock probe and the target nucleic acid may be immobilised.

The system is illustrated diagrammatically in Figure 1 of the accompanying drawings. This shows that in the first stage, a target nucleic
25   acid 10 has been immobilised on a support 12. A padlock probe 14 has been hybridised to a target sequence of the target nucleic acid and has been circularised. An oligonucleotide primer 16 has been hybridised to a first site of the padlock probe for recognition by a type IIS enzyme 18, which is about to cut the target nucleic acid within the target sequence. In
30   the second stage of the figure, the type IIS restriction endonuclease has cut the target sequence at 20 and the resulting 3'-end 22 has been chain

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extended by a rolling circle replication reaction involving the padlock
probe 14.

   The alternative in which the target nucleic acid is cut before
hybridisation with a probe, gives rise to another possibility. This is that the
5   target nucleic acid fragment that results from cutting may itself be
circularised and amplified by rolling circle replication. Thus in this aspect
the invention provides a method of detecting a target nucleic acid having
two non-adjacent target sequences, which method comprises the steps of:

   i)   Cutting the target nucleic acid so as to create a target nucleic
10   acid fragment having a 5'-end target sequence and a 3'-end target
sequence,

   ii)   Providing a probe having two adjacent sequences
complementary to the target sequences,

   iii)   Forming a hybrid of the target nucleic acid fragment with the
15   probe, and circularising the target nucleic acid fragment, and

   iv)   Effecting rolling circle replication of the circularised target
nucleic acid fragment. Preferably this step is performed using the probe as
primer.

   If the rolling circle product is digested and the size of the
20   monomers estimated by gel electrophoresis, then the size of the target
sequence can be estimated. This can be of value to estimate the size of
trinucleotide repeats in conditions such as the fragile X syndrome.
Alternatively, the circularised molecule or rolling circle replication products
thereof can be investigated, e.g. by DNA sequence analysis. In a variant of
25   the above, both the probe and the target nucleic acid can be designed to
undergo circularisation. In this latter case, either can be opened to prime
rolling circle replication of the other.

   This aspect of the invention is illustrated in Figure 4 of the
accompanying drawing, in which a target nucleic acid fragment 48 in
30   solution has hybridised to an immobilised probe 50, and has been
circularised. Thereafter, the immobilised probe 50 will act as a primer for

rolling circle replication of the target nucleic acid fragment 48.

In another alternative it is possible, and perhaps advantageous, to use two (or more) padlock probes instead of just one. In this aspect of the invention there is provided a method of detecting a target

5   sequence of a target nucleic acid, which method comprises the steps of:-

i)   Providing a first padlock probe having 5'-end and 3'-end sequences which are complementary to the target sequence, and an intermediate sequence,

ii)   Providing a second padlock probe having 5'-end and 3'-end

10   sequences which are complementary to the intermediate sequence of the first padlock probe,

iii)   Forming a hybrid by hybridising the first padlock probe to the target nucleic acid and hybridising the second padlock probe to the first padlock probe, and circularising both padlock probes,

15   iv)   Purifying the hybrid,

v)   Subjecting the hybrid to restriction thereby cutting the first padlock probe, and

vi)   Effecting rolling circle replication of the second padlock probe.

In step iii), a hybrid is formed by hybridising the first padlock

20   probe to the target nucleic acid and hybridising the second padlock probe to the first padlock probe, and circularising both padlock probes. The techniques for performing these steps are well known in the art and may be as discussed above. Any one (or none) of the target nucleic acid, the first padlock probe or the second padlock probe may be immobilised.

25   Step iv) of the method involves purifying the hybrid, which may be done by means of superstringent washing, e.g. using pH, temperature or percentage formamide to denature the DNA hybrid. This step is effective to remove: any second padlock probe that has not been circularised; and any second padlock probe that has hybridised to a first

30   padlock probe which has itself not been circularised (e.g. because it has not hybridised to a target sequence). This separation may be aided if

eith r the target nucleic acid or the first padlock probe is immobilised on a
solid support. In step v), the first padlock probe is cut, and in step vi) rolling
circle replication of the second padlock probe is effected. As in the
previous method, it is preferred that in step v) the first padlock probe is cut
5   within the intermediate sequence which is hybridised to the second padlock
probe. to provide a primer by means of which rolling circle replication of the
second padlock probe is effected in step vi).

Cutting the first padlock probe within its intermediate
sequence may be effected by the use of a type IIS restriction endonuclease
10 as described above. Alternatively, the intermediate sequence of the first
padlock probe may include modified residues that may be cleaved. such as
dU-residues, susceptible to base removal by UTP glycosylase, followed by
cleavage by ExoIII or alkali or heat. Since the intermediate sequence may
be chosen at will, it may be designed to include a recognition sequence of
15 any convenient restriction enzyme e.g. HincII, with the second padlock
probe being protected e.g. by provision of phosphorothioate linkages.

The system is illustrated in part A of Figure 2. In the first part
of this diagram, a hybrid has been formed by hybridising to a first padlock
probe 24, which is immobilised on a solid support 26, a target sequence in
20 solution 28, and a second padlock probe 30. Both padlock probes have
been circularised. At the second stage, the first padlock probe has been
cut at 32 (without cutting the second padlock probe), and the 3'-end of the
restriction fragment 34 has acted as a primer for rolling circle replication of
the second padlock probe.

25 Also included within the scope of this invention is a kit for
performing the above method, which kit comprises the first padlock probe
and the second padlock probe as described. In this and other cases, it will
generally be convenient for the nucleotides used for rolling circle replication
to include a labelled nucleotide for easy detection. Alternatively, the rolling
30 circle replication product can be investigated using a hybridisation probe.

In Figure 2B, a target nucleic acid fragment 27 has hybridised

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to the padlock probe 25. The padlock probe has been circularised and is about to be amplified by rolling circle replication using an immobilised oligonucleotide 29 as primer. In a development of this technique. both the padlock probe 25 and the target nucleic acid fragment 27 can be

5   circularised and thus catenated if the 5'- and 3'-ends of each molecule can hybridise to the other, but in such a way that the ends to be joined by ligation do not hybridise immediately opposite one another. This probe-target configuration offers increased specificity of detection; but rolling circle replication of one molecule requires linearisation of the other,

10   preferably within the base-paired region.

Patent specification WO 96/14406 describes enzymatic synthesis of padlock probes. These probes can also be detected via a rolling circle mechanism if catenation can be avoided. This can be achieved if they are first generated with a type IIS restriction enzyme and

15   the 5'-phosphate replaced with a thiophosphate by phosphatase treatment. followed by kinasing with γ-thiophosphate ATP. In this manner these probes are also protected from digestion with the same IIS enzyme after target recognition as described above. Binding of such enzymatically prepared probes can also be visualised using a linked detection padlock

20   probe as also described above.

According to patent specification WO 97/00446, enhanced immune detection can be achieved by requiring coincident binding of two or more affinity probes, for example antibodies, to a target molecule. Upon target recognition, oligonucleotides bound to the affinity probes are brought

25   close enough to be joined by ligation forming a longer oligonucleotide which can template an expotential nucleic acid amplification reaction through PCR or NASBA, etc. In this aspect, the present invention uses a related approach but employing rolling circle replication of a padlock probe. Thus the invention provides a method of assaying for a polyepitopic target

30   by providing:-

a)   A first affinity probe for the target which first affinity probe

carries a polynucleotide chain including a first polynucleotide sequence,

b)   A second affinity probe for the target which second affinity probe carries a polynucleotide chain including a terminal second polynucleotide sequence, and

5   c)   A padlock probe having 5'-end and 3'-end sequences which are complementary to the first polynucleotide sequence, and an intermediate sequence which is complementary to a 3'-end of the second polynucleotide sequence,

which method comprises binding the first affinity probe to the

10   target; binding the second affinity probe to the target; hybridising the padlock probe to the first polynucleotide sequence and to the second polynucleotide sequence; circularising the padlock probe; and using the second polynucleotide sequence as a primer to effect rolling circle amplification of the padlock probe.

15   The invention also provides a kit for performing the method, which kit comprises the first and second affinity probes and the padlock probe. Preferably the first affinity probe and the second affinity probe are selected from: polyclonal, monoclonal and single chain antibodies and fragments thereof; receptors, lectins and nucleic acid aptamers.

20   In the method, the first affinity probe and the second affinity probe are incubated with the target, under conditions to cause them to bind to the target. Then the padlock probe is hybridised to the first polynucleotide sequence and is circularised. If the two affinity probes bound to the target are close enough together, then the terminal second

25   polynucleotide sequence of the second affinity probe becomes hybridised to the intermediate sequence of the padlock probe. On addition of a supply of nucleotides and a polymerase enzyme, rolling circle replication of the padlock probe can be effected. Use of a radioactively or otherwise labelled nucleotide provides a correspondingly amplified signal related to the

30   presence or concentration of the polyepitopic target.

The system is illustrated in Figure 3 of the accompanying

drawings, in which there is shown a polyepitopic target 36, a first antibody 38 for the target which carries a polynucleotide chain 40 including a first polynucleotide sequence; a second antibody 42 for the target which carries a polynucleotide chain 44 including a terminal second polynucleotide

5   sequence; and a padlock probe 46 which has hybridised to both polynucleotide chains and has been circularised. Upon addition of a supply of nucleotides and a polymerase enzyme, the polynucleotide chain 44 will act as a primer for rolling circle replication of the padlock probe 46.

Rolling circle products generated by any of the methods

10   described herein can be visualised during synthesis using so called molecular beacons. (S Tyagi and F R Kramer, 1996, Nature Biotechnology, 14, 303-308). A molecular beacon is a usually hairpin shaped oligonucleotide carrying a fluorescing label at one end, and at the other end a compound that modulates or inhibits the fluorescence.

15   Unfolding the normally hairpin-shaped molecular beacon modulates or enhances the fluorescence signal in an easily observed way. A molecular beacon designed to have a sequence corresponding to that of a padlock probe, can be used to monitor rolling circle replication of the padlock probe.

This system is illustrated in Figure 5 of the accompanying

20   drawings. A padlock probe 52 has been hybridised to a target sequence of a target nucleic acid 54 and has been circularised. The target nucleic acid has been cut at 56 and the resulting 3'-end 58 has been chain extended by a rolling circle replication reaction involving the padlock probe 52. A molecular beacon 60 has a terminal fluorescent group 62 and a terminal

25   quenching group 64, and an intermediate sequence corresponding to that of the padlock probe 52. As rolling circle replication takes place, successive molecules of the molecular beacon become hybridised to the extending chain at 66 in a conformation which permits enhanced fluorescence of the fluorescent group.

30   Reference is directed to Figures 6 – 14, which are described in the following.

Experimental Section

Materials and Method

Oligonucleotides synthesised by Interactiva:

5   M13-Fo1s (56 nt) contains 6 phosphorothioates

M13-Fo2 (56 nt) contains no phosphorothioates

M13-Ls1 (23 nt) contains FokI cleavage-site

M13-T3s is used as template

M13-K1 (34 nt) is used as a FokI cleavage adapter.

10

Oligonucleotides synthesised in house using an ABI 394 DNA Synthesiser:

M13c70-rol (70 nt) used as a padlock probe

Primer Mval (21 nt) used for M13 cleavage by Mval.

RvRolcpr (21 nt) used for cleavage of RCR-product by HpaII

15

Labelling:

         The probes were 5'-radiolabelled using 30 units T4

polynucleotide kinase (Amersham) in 50 µl 10 mM Tris Ac pH 7.5, 10 mM

MgAc$_2$, 50 mM KAc and 30 µCi gamma 32P-ATP (3000 mCi/mMol, NEN

20   Dupont) at 37°C for 10 min, and the oligonucleotides were purified on a

Sephadex G-50 µspin column (Pharmacia).

FokI cleavage using oligonucleotides:

         Oligonucleotides, one labelled at the time, were mixed and

25   allowed to hybridise by incubating 1 pmol M13-T3S, 2 pmol M13-Fo1s or

M13-Fo2 together with 3 pmol M13-Ls1 or M13-K1 in 20 µl 10 mM TrisAc

pH 7.5, 10 mM MgAc$_2$, 50 mM KAc, 1 mM ATP, 0.1 µg/µl BSA at 65°C for

10 min and allowed to cool at room temperature for 10 min. FokI was

added to a conc of 0.5 units/µl and the reaction was incubated at 37°C for

30   60 min. The enzyme was heat inactivated at 65°C for 20 min and the

reaction was allowed to cool to room temperature for 10 min.

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FokI cleavages of M13 using padlock and FokI-adapter:

0.75 pmol M13mp18+strand (Pharmacia), 0.25 pmol M13c70-Rol (labelled) and 1.5 pmol M13-K1 were mixed and allowed to hybridise as described above. The FokI cleaved was performed as described above.

Mval cleavages of M13 using padlock and Mval-primer:

0.75 pmol M13mp18+strand (Pharmacia), 0.25 pmol M13c70-Rol (labelled) and 1.5 pmol Mval-primer in 20 μl 10 mM TrisAc pH 7.5, 10 mM $MgAc_2$, 50 mM KAc, 1 mM ATP, 0.2 μg/μl BSA was incubated at 65°C for 10 min and allowed to cool at room temperature for 10 min. 2 units Mval was added and the reaction was incubated at 37°C for 60 min. the enzyme was heat-inactivated at 65°C for 15 min and the reaction was allowed to cool to room temperature for 10 min.

Phi 29 DNA polymerase reaction:

1 μl enzyme reaction was added to 50 mM Tris-HCl pH 7.5, 10 mM $MgCl_2$, 20mM $(NH_4)_2SO_4$, 1 mM dithiothreitol and 0.2 μg/μl BSA, 0.25 mM dNTP, 5 μCi alpha 32P dCTP (3000 Ci/mmol, NEN Dupont) and 2 ng/μl Phi29 DNA polymerase (provided from Amersham) and incubated at 37°C for 60 min. The enzyme was heat inactivated at 65°C for 20 min.

Cleavages of RCR-product:

1 μl RCR-reaction is added in 10 mM Bis Tris Propane-HCl, 10 mM $MgCl_2$, 1 mM dithiothreitol (pH 7.0) and 1 pmol/μl RvRolcpr and is incubated at 65°C for 10 min and allowed to cool at room temperature for 10 min. 1 units HpaII was added and the reaction was incubated at 37°C overnight. The enzyme was heat inactivated at 65°C for 20 min.

Sequences

M13-Fo1s

CAGCA<u>GGATG</u>TCTTCTAGT$_s$G$_s$C$_s$C$_s$A$_s$A$_s$GCTTGCATGCCTGCAGG

5   TCGACTCTAGAGGAT

M13-Fo2

CAGCA<u>GGATG</u>CCTTCTAGTGCCAAGCTTGCATGCCTGCAGGTCGA

CTCTAGAGGAT

10

M13-Ls1

AGAAGACATCCTG$_s$C$_s$T$_s$G$_s$T$_s$T$_s$T$_s$T$_s$T$_s$T$_s$T$_s$

M13-T3s

15   ATCCTCTAGAGTCGACCTGCAGGCATGCAAGCT↑TGGCACTGGC↑C

GTCGTTTTACCAAACTC$_s$A$_s$A$_s$G$_s$A$_s$A$_s$G$_s$G$_s$A$_s$C$_s$C

M13-K1

CA<u>CATCC</u>GTGCAC<u>GGATG</u>TGGTAAAAC↑GACGGCC

20

M13c70-ro1

TGCCTGCAGGTCGACTTTTTTTTTTATGTTAAGTGACCGGCAGCA

TTTTTTTTTTAGTGCCAAGCTTGCA

25   Primer MvaI

TGGGTAACGCCAGGGTTTTCC

RvRo1cpr

ATGTTAAGTTGACCGGCAGCA

30

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Example 1

Strand Specific cleavage by FokI and protection by phosphorothioates (Figure 6).

Enzyme titration. This experiment involves two partially
5   complementary oligonucleotides, 29 and 39 nucleotides in length. Both
were labelled at the 5' end by kinaseing, adding a 32P residue. In the left
hand set 1 through 8, both oligonucleotides were composed of regular
nucleotides, and addition of the type IIS restriction endonuclease FokI,
resulted in cleavage of both strands. This results in loss of the 29-mer, and
10   gain of a 17-mer fragment. Similarly, the 39-mer is replaced by an 8-mer.
In the right-hand set 1 through 8, the 29-mer contained a phosphorothioate-
residue where the restriction enzyme otherwise would have cleaved. The
experiment shows that phosphorothioate-residues block cleavage of the
modified strand without inhibiting cleavage of the other strand. (This
15   property has not been previously demonstrated for this enzyme, but it is
well established for several type II enzymes, having cleavage sites within
their recognition sequence.)

Example 2

20   ### Strand-specific cleavage using FokI followed by Phi29 polymerisation (Figure 7)

Here a branched substrate for restriction digestion was used.
The 56-mer is complementary to a 23-mer at its 5'-end and to a
(radiolabelled) 71-mer at its 3' end. The 23-mer includes the recognition
25   sequence of the enzyme FokI, but is cleavage site is located across the
branch. The sample shown in lane 3 is untreated. The sample in lane 1
was treated with the restriction enzyme, generating a shorter fragment of
33. In lane 4 the polymerase Phi29 and nucleotides had been present, with
no consequences, compared to lane 3, as expected. Finally, in lane 2
30   restriction was followed by polymerisation. Only a small fraction of the
cleavage products have been extended by a few nucleotides to fill in the 5'

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overhang generated by restriction cleavage. The experiment demonstrates that cleavage across a branch is possible, as has been previously shown by Szybalski. The reason for the poor polymerisation in this experiment, as required to initiate a rolling circle replication, is not clear. (The 100 nt

5   fragment is an unintended extension product of the 71-mer.).

Example 3

Strand-specific cleavage using *FokI* and protection by phosphorothioates followed by Phi29 polymerisation (Figure 8)

10   The experiment is similar to the previous one, except that in this experiment the 56-mer was protected from restriction cleavage by being modified with phosphorothioates. Lane 3: starting material. Lane 1: restriction cleaved. Lane 4: Addition of polymerase and nucleotides; most 56-mers remain unchanged (, although some seem to have been extended

15   somehow as mentioned for the above experiment). Lane 2: Here most of the 33-mer cleavage products have been extended, copying the now uncleaved 56-mer, just as would be required to initiate a rolling circle replication by directing a cleavage reaction to the target strand for padlock recognition, allowing the target to prime a rolling-circle replication reaction.

20

Example 4

Strand-specific cleavage by *FokI* and protection by phosphorothioates (Figure 9)

A simpler variant of the preceding experiment, but with the

25   56-mer strand 5' labelled with radioactive phosphate. The unprotected strand is cleaved as expected, but the protected one is cleaved farther away than normal, where it is unprotected, indicating that a larger sequence may have to be protected by being modified with phosphorothioates.

30

- 19 -

Example 5

Cleavage by *FokI* by using a *FokI*-adapter (Figure 10)

In this experiment an alternative means is used to cleave the padlock-target strand, in this case downstream of where the probe has
5   bound. An oligonucleotide that includes a self-complementary segment directs recognition by the restriction enzyme and cleavage where this adapter hybridises to a target strand. Lane 3: no restriction enzyme. Lane 1: restriction resulting in a shorter fragment of 43 bases. Lane 4: no effect by addition of polymerase. Lane 2, some of the 43-mer cleavage
10   product is extended by the polymerase to generate a 56-mer, templated by the unlabelled 56-mer oligonucleotide.

Example 6

Initiation of rolling circle replication by cleavage of the target strand
15   **(Figure 11)**

In this experiment the external adapter of the previous experiment was used to cleave the circular single stranded M13 target for recognition by a padlock probe. Labelling was by incorporation of radioactive nucleotides, and with a 5'-labelled padlock probe. This
20   experiment as shown here is not conclusive because unligated padlocks can prime a rolling-circle replication, templated by M13. This is addressed in the gel shown in Example 8.

Example 7

25   **Initiation of rolling circle replication by cleavage of the target strand (Figure 12)**

Similar to the preceding experiment except that cleavage of the target strand took advantage of a resident restriction site which was rendered double stranded by hybridising an oligonucleotide. Again the two
30   types of polymerised molecules are distinguished in Example 8.

Example 8

Cleavage of rolling circle product with restriction enzyme (Figure 13)

Here the experiments shown in Examples 6 and 7 have been
further investigated, to reveal that the polymerase Phi29 can effect a
5   rolling-circle replication of the circularised padlock probes, and that the
reaction was primed by the target sequence after the target M13 strand
was cleaved using a FokI adapter (Example 6) or the resident recognition
sequence for MvaI. Ligase indicates whether the padlock probe has been
ligated. RE means either FokI (lanes 1-8) or MvaI (lanes 9-16), used as a
10   means to cleave the target molecule downstream of the site where the
padlock probe has bound. All samples were treated with Phi29
polymerase. Products of the extension reaction shown in even-number
lanes were treated with the restriction enzyme HpaII in the presence of
oligonucleotide RvRo1cpr to cleave the rolling-circle products to
15   monomers. The cleavage allowed identification of polymerisation products
that arise by copying of the circularised padlock probe, as opposed to ones
templated by the M13 genome. The 70-mer product of the enzyme
reaction which is visible in lanes 8 and 16 clearly shows that a rolling circle
replication was primed from the target strand by cleaving the M13 molecule
20   that served as target for ligation, downstream of where the padlock probe
had bound. This reaction generated copies of the padlock probe.

Figure 14 shows the four oligomers M13-Fo1s (56 nt);
M13-Ls1 (23 nt); M13-K1 (34 nt) and M13-T3s (71 nt) hybridised together.
25   Sites for Fok1 binding and cleavage, and phosphorothioate bonds, are
shown together with oligonucleotide lengths.

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CLAIMS

5   1.   A method of detecting a target sequence of a target nucleic acid which method comprises the steps of:-

i)   providing a padlock probe for the target sequence,

ii)   forming a hybrid of the padlock probe with the target nucleic acid, and circularising the padlock probe,

10   iii)   cutting the target nucleic acid at or near the target sequence, this step iii) being performed before, during or after step ii), and

iv)   effecting rolling circle replication of the padlock probe.

2.   The method of claim 1, wherein step iii) is performed by
15   subjecting the hybrid to restriction thereby cutting the target nucleic acid at or near the target sequence but without cutting the circularised padlock probe.

3.   The method of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein in step iii) the
20   target nucleic acid is cut within the target sequence to provide a primer by means of which rolling circle replication of the padlock probe is effected in step iv).

4.   The method of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the target nucleic
25   acid is cut downstream of the target sequence following which any non-basepaired nucleotides are removed by a 3'-exonuclease.

5.   The method of claim 4, wherein Phi29 is used as a polymerase enzyme having also 3'-exonuclease activity.

6.   The method of any one of claims 3 to 5, wherein in step iii) restriction is effected by means of a type IIS enzyme.

7.   The method of any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the target
5   nucleic acid is circular.

8.   An oligonucleotide suitable for use as a padlock probe for a target nucleic acid sequence, which oligonucleotide has 5'-end and 3'-end sequences complementary to the target sequence; a first site for
10 recognition by a type IIS enzyme; and a second site where at least one nucleotide residue and/or internucleotide bond is modified to protect the oligonucleotide from restriction by the type IIS enzyme.

9.   The oligonucleotide of claim 8, wherein at least one
15 phosphorothioate internucleotide bond is provided at the second site to protect the oligonucleotide from restriction by the type IIS enzyme.

10.   The oligonucleotide of claim 8 or claim 9, wherein the first site is suitable for recognition by a type IIS enzyme FokI.

20
11.   A method of detecting a target nucleic acid having two non-adjacent target sequences, which method comprises the steps of:
i)   cutting the target nucleic acid so as to create a target nucleic acid fragment having a 5'-end target sequence and a 3'-end target
25 sequence,
ii)   providing a probe having two adjacent sequences complementary to the two target sequences,
iii)   forming a hybrid of the target nucleic acid fragment with the probe, and circularising the target nucleic acid fragment, and
30 iv)   effecting rolling circle replication of the circularised target nucleic acid fragment.

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12.   A method of detecting a target sequence of a target nucleic acid, which method comprises the steps of:-

i)   providing a first padlock probe having 5'-end and 3'-end sequences which are complementary to the target sequence, and an intermediate sequence,

ii)   providing a second padlock probe having 5'-end and 3'-end sequences which are complementary to the intermediate sequence of the first padlock probe,

iii)   forming a hybrid by hybridising the first padlock probe to the target nucleic acid and hybridising the second padlock probe to the first padlock probe, and circularising both padlock probes,

iv)   purifying the hybrid,

v)   subjecting the hybrid to restriction thereby cutting the first padlock probe, and

vi)   effecting rolling circle replication of the second padlock probe.

13.   The method of claim 12, wherein in step v) the first padlock probe is cut within the intermediate sequence which has hybridised to the second padlock probe, to provide a primer by means of which rolling circle replication of the second padlock probe is effected in step vi).

14.   The method of claim 12, wherein in step v) the first padlock probe is cut downstream of the intermediate sequence which has hybridised to the second padlock probe, following which any non-basepaired nucleotides are removed by a 3'-exonuclease to provide a primer by means of which rolling circle replication of the second padlock probe is effected in step vi).

15.   The method of claim 14, wherein Phi29 is used as a polymerase enzyme having also 3'-exonuclease activity.

16.   The method of any one of claims 13 to 15, wherein in step v) restriction is effected by means of a type IIS enzyme.

17.   A kit for detecting a target sequence of a target nucleic acid, which kit comprises:-

a)   A first padlock probe having 5'-end and 3'-end sequences which are complementary to the target sequence, and an intermediate sequence,

b)   A second padlock probe having 5'-end and 3'-end sequences which are complementary to the intermediate sequence of the first probe.

18.   A method of assaying for a polyepitopic target by providing:-

a)   A first affinity probe for the target which first affinity probe carries a polynucleotide chain including a first polynucleotide sequence,

b)   A second affinity probe for the target which second affinity probe carries a polynucleotide chain including a terminal second polynucleotide sequence, and

c)   A padlock probe having 5'-end and 3'-end sequences which are complementary to the first polynucleotide sequence, and an intermediate sequence which is complementary to the second polynucleotide sequence,

        which method comprises binding the first affinity probe to the target; binding the second affinity probe to the target; hybridising the padlock probe to the first polynucleotide sequence and to the second polynucleotide sequence; circularising the padlock probe; and using the second polynucleotide sequence as a primer to effect rolling circle amplification of the padlock probe.

19.   A kit for assaying for a polyepitopic target which kit
comprises:-

a)   A first affinity probe for the target which first affinity probe
carries a polynucleotide chain including a first polynucleotide sequence,

5   b)   A second affinity probe for the target which second affinity
probe carries a polynucleotide chain including a terminal second
polynucleotide sequence, and

c)   A padlock probe having 5'-end and 3'-end sequences which
are complementary to the first polynucleotide sequence, and an

10   intermediate sequence which is complementary to the second
polynucleotide sequence.

20.   The kit of claim 19, wherein the first affinity probe and the
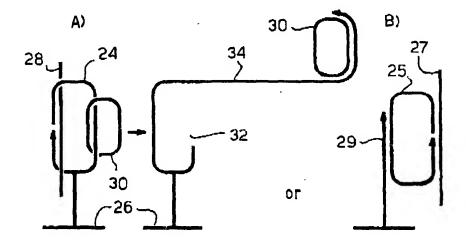second affinity probe are both antibodies.

Fig.1.

Fig.2.

Fig.3.

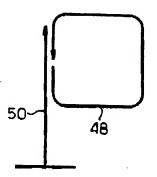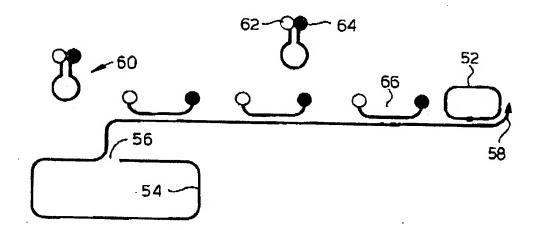# Fig.4.

Fig.5.

Figure 6

4 3 2 1

m100

41

33

56
19
FokI
23
33
41

Sample	FokI	Phi29
1	+	−
2	−	+
3	−	−
4	−	+

Figure 7

Sample	FokI	Phi29
1	+	−
2	+	+
3	−	−
4	−	+

Figure 8

Sample FokI
1   +
2   −
3 s +
4 s −

Figure 9

Figure 10

Sample	Ligas	FokI	Phi29
1	-	-	-
2	-	-	+
3	+	-	-
4	+	-	+
5	-	+	-
6	-	+	+
7	+	+	-
8	+	+	+

Figure 11

Sample	Ligas	MvaI	Phi29
1	–	–	–
2	–	–	+
3	+	–	–
4	+	–	+
5	–	+	–
6	–	+	+
7	+	+	–
8	+	+	+

Figure 12

Sample	Ligas	RE	HpaⅡ
1	−	−	−
2	−	−	+
3	+	−	−
4	+	−	+
5	−	+	−
6	−	+	+
7	+	+	−
8	+	+	+
9	−	−	−
10	−	−	+
11	+	−	−
12	+	−	+
13	−	+	−
14	−	+	+
15	+	+	−
16	+	+	+

Figure 13

Figure 14

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PCT/EP 99/02111	

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B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
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Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	WO 97 19193 A (UNIV YALE) 29 May 1997 (1997-05-29) see whole doc., esp. claims and figures	1-20
A	WO 92 01813 A (SYNGENE INC) 6 February 1992 (1992-02-06)	1-20
P,X	BANER J. ET AL.,: "Signal amplification of padlock probes by rolling circle replication" NUCLEIC ACIDS RESEARCH, vol. 26, no. 22, - 15 November 1998 (1998-11-15) pages 5073-5078, XP002112357 cited in the application the whole document	1-20

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

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(71)(72) Applicant and Inventor: LANDEGREN, Ulf [SE/SE]; Uppsala University, Dept. of Medical Genetics, Biomedical Center, P.O. Box 589, S–751 23 Uppsala (SE).

(74) Agents: PENNANT, Pyers et al.; Stevens Hewlett & Perkins, 1 Serjeants' Inn, Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1NT (GB).

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(54) Title: ROLLING CIRCLE REPLICATION OF PADLOCK PROBES

(57) Abstract

Rolling circle replication of a padlock primer is inhibited when it is hybridised to a target nucleic acid that is long or circular. The invention provides methods of addressing this problem including cutting the target nucleic acid near or preferably at the site which hybridises with the padlock probe, whereby a 3'–end of the cut target nucleic acid acts as a primer for rolling circle replication of the padlock probe. Also included is a method for assaying for a polyepitopic target by the use of two affinity probes each carrying an oligonucleotide tag and of padlock probe for rolling circle replication in association with the two affinity probes.

ROLLING CIRCLE REPLICATION OF PADLOCK PROBES

5 **Introduction**

Various methods are in use for detecting single or multiple
nucleotide variations in DNA or RNA samples (1,2). Most methods dep nd
on amplification of the target sequence prior to analysis, commonly by
PCR. Thereby, valuable information on the localisation of allelic variants is
10 lost. Information on the localisation of sequence variants is important e.g.
to determine haplotypes of several variable sequences along
chromosomes in the study of inherited disorders; to determine if two
mutations in a gene are present in the same copy or in alternate alleles; or
to study replication timing of alleles in the cell cycle (3) or the distribution of
15 mutant cells in a malignant tissue. Single nucleotide discrimination in
single copy gene sequences *in situ* is presently not possible, but it has
recently been shown to work efficiently on repeated sequences using
padlock probes (4), a new class of gene diagnostic probe molecules (5).
These are linear oligonucleotides with target complementary sequences at
20 the ends and a non-target complementary sequence in between. When
hybridised to the correct target DNA sequence, the two ends are brought
together, head to tail, and can be joined by a DNA ligase. As a
consequence of the helical nature of double stranded DNA the resulting
circular probe molecule is catenated to the target DNA strand. This probe
25 design has some important features. First, the requirement for two
independent oligonucleotide hybridisation events in order for ligation to
occur provides sufficient specificity to detect single-copy genes in the
complexity of a complete human genome (6-8). Second, ligation is greatly
inhibited by mismatches at the ligation junction, allowing single nucleotide
30 distinction in the target sequence (4,8-10). Third as the topological link
between probe and target DNA strands is independent of hybridisation

stability, denaturing washes can be applied reducing non-specific hybridisation (5). Fourth, unlike PCR or LCR, only intramolecular interactions probe reactions are scored, avoiding problems of simultaneously applying large sets of probes (11). Whereas combinations of many pairs of PCR primers leads to a rapidly increasing risk of spurious amplification products, formed between any combinations of primers, this is not the case for padlock probes. Lastly, the joining of the probe ends creates a new class of molecules, not present before the reaction; these circular molecules can be amplified in a rolling circle replication reaction to detect ligated probes (12,13).

Amplification of a circular nucleic acid molecule free in solution by a rolling circle replication reaction may be achieved simply by hybridising a primer to the circular nucleic acid and providing a supply of nucleotides and a polymerase enzyme. However, problems may arise when the circular nucleic acid is not free in solution. In the particular case of a padlock primer which is catenated to its target, it might reasonably be expected that the target would inhibit a rolling circle replication reaction. In previously unpublished work leading up to the present invention, the inventors have demonstrated that such inhibition does indeed take place (18). They found that, if the target is circular, for example the circular 7kbM13 genome, then rolling circle replication of a padlock primer catenated to the target is effectively prevented. Where a target is linear, it is possible in principle for a padlock formed thereon to slide along the target molecule and off the end, thereby becoming free in solution and available for amplification by a rolling circle replication reaction. Alternatively, the target sequence, 3' of the site of binding by the padlock probe, may be digested by exonucleolysis, allowing the remaining target strand to prime rolling circle replication. In practice, the inventors have found that this sliding and uncoupling effect is possible to a limited extent even with long linear targets. Thus, converting the circular 7kbM13 genome by restriction at a single site into a linear 7kb nucleic acid molecule

with 3.5kb upstream and 3.5kb downstream of the hybridisation site of the padlock primer, limited amplification of the padlock primer was possible by rolling circle replication. But where the target nucleic acid is substantially shorter, e.g. a few tens or hundreds of bases, rolling circle replication of a

5 padlock primer formed thereon is much more rapid and efficient.

For *in situ* detection of a target sequence in a metaphase chromosome, the target sequence is likely to be part of a target molecule so long as to inhibit amplification by rolling circle replication of a padlock primer formed thereon. This problem may be addressed by linearising or

10 shortening the target molecule. Thus a target molecule might be linearised by restriction digestion before the addition of padlock probes. Alternatively, a primer extension reaction might be performed to generate a relatively short nucleic acid molecule suitable as a target for padlock probe recognition. For *in situ* detection in metaphase chromosomes, these two

15 methods are subject to the disadvantage that they risk causing loss of target DNA and thereby loss of detection.

The Invention

In one aspect of the present invention, this problem is

20 addressed by cutting the target molecule before, during or after target recognition and probe circularisation. In this aspect the invention provides a method of detecting a target sequence of a target nucleic acid which method comprises the steps of:-

i)   providing a padlock probe for the target sequence,

25 ii)   forming a hybrid of the padlock probe with the target nucleic acid, and circularising the padlock probe,

iii) ·   cutting the target nucleic acid at or near the target sequence, this step iii) being performed before, during or after step ii), and

iv)   effecting rolling circle replication of the padlock probe.

30   The target nucleic acid may in principle be DNA or RNA. The method of the invention is likely to be useful particularly when the target

nucleic acid is a long-chain or circular molecule. The target sequence is of sufficient length to hybridise with the two ends of the padlock probe. The method of the invention is expected to be particularly useful for localised detection of single-copy gene sequences and for distinction among

5 sequence variants in microscopic specimens, and for probes immobilised in one or two dimensional arrays.

The padlock probe has a 5'-end sequence and 3'-end sequence complementary to the target sequence; so that it can be circularised e.g. by ligation when hybridised to the target sequence.

10 Precise complementarity is not necessarily required, but there must be sufficient complementarity to permit hybridisation of the padlock probe to the target sequence, and circularisation of the padlock probe by ligation. It is in principle possible to provide a padlock probe in two parts, in which case two ligation reactions are required to achieve circularisation. The size

15 of the padlock probe needs to be suitable to permit amplification by a rolling circle replication reaction, preferably at least about 25 nt and not more than 150 – 200 nt, though larger probes are possible particularly when used with a polymerase not having exonuclease activity, especially 5' to 3' exonuclease activity.

20 Step ii) of the method involves forming a hybrid of the padlock probe with the target sequence of the target nucleic acid, and circularising the padlock probe. These steps may be carried out under conventional conditions. If the target nucleic acid sample under investigation does not contain the target sequence, then hybridisation and circularisation of the

25 padlock probe occur not at all or only to a limited extent.

In step iii) of the method, the target nucleic acid is cut at or near the target sequence. This cut may be made by means well known in the art. Although the distance of the restriction site from the target sequence may be substantial, e.g. 3.5kb as above or even greater, it is

30 preferably within a few bases or a few tens of bases of the target sequence.

Thus the target nucleic acid may be linearised by restriction digestion before the addition of a padlock probe. Alternatively, a primer extension reaction may be performed to generate a relatively short nucleic acid molecule suitable as a target for padlock probe recognition. For *in situ* detection in metaphase chromosomes, these two methods are subject to the disadvantage that they risk causing loss of target DNA and thereby loss of detection. Preferably therefore step iii) is performed by subjecting the hybrid to restriction thereby cutting the target nucleic acid at or near the target sequence but without cutting the circularised padlock probe.

In step iv), the padlock probe is amplified by a rolling circle replication reaction. This usually requires a primer to hybridise to the circularised padlock probe, a supply of nucleotides and a polymerase enzyme, and may be effected by means well known in the art. A preferred polymerase enzyme is φ29 DNA polymerase which has high processivity and 3'-exonuclease activity.

Therefore when a target sequence is cleaved 3' of where a padlock probe has bound, then any non-basepaired nucleotides may be removed by the polymerase, until a 3' end basepaired to the padlock probe is obtained, whereupon rolling circle replication (RCR) can be initiated without the addition of an external primer, and ensuring that the RCR product is continuous with the target sequence. Such cleavage can be accomplished by hybridising an oligonucleotide to the target sequence downstream of where the probe has bound. The sequence can then be cleaved using a restriction enzyme whose recognition sequence has been rendered double stranded by this hybridisation. Alternatively, a hairpin oligonucleotide can be used, having one double stranded end containing a recognition sequence for a type IIS enzyme, e.g. FokI, and another end hybridising to the target sequence 3' of where the padlock probe has bound.

If the padlock probe hybridises to the target sequence across a restriction site, then the padlock can be protected e.g. by being modified

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with phosphorothioates, allowing the target sequence to be cleaved without opening the padlock.

If the target nucleic acid is RNA, and is restricted at a site now within the target sequence, then a 3'-end capable of initiating rolling
5   circle replication of the padlock primer can be obtained by RNase H digestion.

According to a preferred method, in step iii) the target nucleic acid is cut within the target sequence. An advantage of this method is that the 3'-end of the target sequence then constitutes a primer by means of
10   which rolling circle replication of the padlock probe may be effected in step iv). Thereby the rolling circle replication product formed is contiguous with the target sequence.

To achieve this, use is preferably made of a type IIS enzyme. (Type IIS enzymes are sometimes referred to as class IIS enzymes or
15   Type IV enzymes.). Type IIS restriction endonucleases are described in the literature (14,15). These enzymes interact with two discrete sites on double-stranded DNA; a recognition site which is 4-7bp long, and a cleavage site usually 1-20bp away from the recognition site. One such type IIS enzyme is the FokI restriction endonuclease (16,17) which
20   recognises a double-stranded 5'-GGATG-3' site and cuts at the 9th and 13th nucleotides downstream from the 5'-3' and 3'-5' strands respectively. When using FokI with ssDNA and oligonucleotides, cutting is observed at the 9th or 13th nucleotide from the recognition site. Cutting occurs independent of whether a double stranded region between the recognition
25   and cut sites is perfectly complementary or not.

To use a type IIS enzyme in the above method, a specially designed padlock probe is required, and this forms another aspect of the invention. In this aspect there is provided an oligonucleotide suitable for use as a padlock probe for a target nucleic acid sequence, which
30   oligonucleotide has 5'-end and 3'-end sequences complementary to the target sequence; a first site for recognition by a type IIS enzyme; and a

second site where at least one nucleotide residue and/or internucleotide bond is modified to protect the oligonucleotide from restriction by the type IIS enzyme.

The first site for recognition by the type IIS enzyme needs to
5   be positioned on the padlock probe so that the enzyme cuts the target nucleic acid sequence. And the second site needs to be positioned on the padlock probe in relation to the first site so as to protect the padlock probe from being cut by the type IIS enzyme. The relative positions of the first and second sites, in relation to the 5'-end and 3'-end sequences, depend
10 on the particular type IIS enzyme to be used. The modification at the second site may also depend on the particular type IIS enzyme to be used. For example, when a FokI enzyme is to be used, and similarly for the type II enzyme HincII, phosphorothioate internucleotide bonds are effective to prevent cleavage of the padlock probe.

15   In the method of the invention, the padlock probe is hybridised to the target sequence and circularised. Then the padlock probe is made double-stranded at the first site for recognition by a type IIS enzyme. Then the enzyme is added and used to cleave the target sequence. Then conditions are adjusted to so as to cause a cleaved
20 fragment of the target sequence to act as a primer to initiate rolling circle replication of the padlock probe. Either (or neither) of the padlock probe and the target nucleic acid may be immobilised.

The system is illustrated diagrammatically in Figure 1 of the accompanying drawings. This shows that in the first stage, a target nucleic
25 acid 10 has been immobilised on a support 12. A padlock probe 14 has been hybridised to a target sequence of the target nucleic acid and has been circularised. An oligonucleotide primer 16 has been hybridised to a first site of the padlock probe for recognition by a type IIS enzyme 18, which is about to cut the target nucleic acid within the target sequence. In
30 the second stage of the figure, the type IIS restriction endonuclease has cut the target sequence at 20 and the resulting 3'-end 22 has been chain

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extended by a rolling circle replication reaction involving the padlock probe 14.

The alternative in which the target nucleic acid is cut before hybridisation with a probe, gives rise to another possibility. This is that the

5   target nucleic acid fragment that results from cutting may itself be circularised and amplified by rolling circle replication. Thus in this aspect the invention provides a method of detecting a target nucleic acid having two non-adjacent target sequences, which method comprises the steps of:

i)   Cutting the target nucleic acid so as to create a target nucleic

10   acid fragment having a 5'-end target sequence and a 3'-end target sequence,

ii)   Providing a probe having two adjacent sequences complementary to the target sequences,

iii)   Forming a hybrid of the target nucleic acid fragment with the

15   probe, and circularising the target nucleic acid fragment, and

iv)   Effecting rolling circle replication of the circularised target nucleic acid fragment. Preferably this step is performed using the probe as primer.

If the rolling circle product is digested and the size of the

20   monomers estimated by gel electrophoresis, then the size of the target sequence can be estimated. This can be of value to estimate the size of trinucleotide repeats in conditions such as the fragile X syndrome. Alternatively, the circularised molecule or rolling circle replication products thereof can be investigated, e.g. by DNA sequence analysis. In a variant of

25   the above, both the probe and the target nucleic acid can be designed to undergo circularisation. In this latter case, either can be opened to prime rolling circle replication of the other.

This aspect of the invention is illustrated in Figure 4 of the accompanying drawing, in which a target nucleic acid fragment 48 in

30   solution has hybridised to an immobilised probe 50, and has been circularised. Thereafter, the immobilised probe 50 will act as a primer for

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rolling circle replication of the target nucleic acid fragment 48.

In another alternative it is possible, and perhaps advantageous, to use two (or more) padlock probes instead of just one. In this aspect of the invention there is provided a method of detecting a target

5   sequence of a target nucleic acid, which method comprises the steps of:-

i)   Providing a first padlock probe having 5'-end and 3'-end sequences which are complementary to the target sequence, and an intermediate sequence,

ii)   Providing a second padlock probe having 5'-end and 3'-end

10   sequences which are complementary to the intermediate sequence of the first padlock probe,

iii)   Forming a hybrid by hybridising the first padlock probe to the target nucleic acid and hybridising the second padlock probe to the first padlock probe, and circularising both padlock probes,

15   iv)   Purifying the hybrid,

v)   Subjecting the hybrid to restriction thereby cutting the first padlock probe, and

vi)   Effecting rolling circle replication of the second padlock probe.

In step iii), a hybrid is formed by hybridising the first padlock

20   probe to the target nucleic acid and hybridising the second padlock probe to the first padlock probe, and circularising both padlock probes. The techniques for performing these steps are well known in the art and may be as discussed above. Any one (or none) of the target nucleic acid, the first padlock probe or the second padlock probe may be immobilised.

25   Step iv) of the method involves purifying the hybrid, which may be done by means of superstringent washing, e.g. using pH, temperature or percentage formamide to denature the DNA hybrid. This step is effective to remove: any second padlock probe that has not been circularised; and any second padlock probe that has hybridised to a first

30   padlock probe which has itself not been circularised (e.g. because it has not hybridised to a target sequence). This separation may be aided if

either the target nucleic acid or the first padlock probe is immobilised on a
solid support. In step v), the first padlock probe is cut, and in step vi) rolling
circle replication of the second padlock probe is effected. As in the
previous method, it is preferred that in step v) the first padlock probe is cut

5   within the intermediate sequence which is hybridised to the second padlock
probe, to provide a primer by means of which rolling circle replication of the
second padlock probe is effected in step vi).

Cutting the first padlock probe within its intermediate
sequence may be effected by the use of a type IIS restriction endonuclease

10   as described above. Alternatively, the intermediate sequence of the first
padlock probe may include modified residues that may be cleaved, such as
dU-residues, susceptible to base removal by UTP glycosylase, followed by
cleavage by ExoIII or alkali or heat. Since the intermediate sequence may
be chosen at will, it may be designed to include a recognition sequence of

15   any convenient restriction enzyme e.g. HincII, with the second padlock
probe being protected e.g. by provision of phosphorothioate linkages.

The system is illustrated in part A of Figure 2. In the first part
of this diagram, a hybrid has been formed by hybridising to a first padlock
probe 24, which is immobilised on a solid support 26, a target sequence in

20   solution 28, and a second padlock probe 30. Both padlock probes have
been circularised. At the second stage, the first padlock probe has been
cut at 32 (without cutting the second padlock probe), and the 3'-end of the
restriction fragment 34 has acted as a primer for rolling circle replication of
the second padlock probe.

25   Also included within the scope of this invention is a kit for
performing the above method, which kit comprises the first padlock probe
and the second padlock probe as described. In this and other cases, it will
generally be convenient for the nucleotides used for rolling circle replication
to include a labelled nucleotide for easy detection. Alternatively, the rolling

30   circle replication product can be investigated using a hybridisation probe.

In Figure 2B, a target nucleic acid fragment 27 has hybridised

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to the padlock probe 25. The padlock probe has been circularised and is
about to be amplified by rolling circle replication using an immobilised
oligonucleotide 29 as primer. In a development of this technique. both the
padlock probe 25 and the target nucleic acid fragment 27 can be
5   circularised and thus catenated if the 5'- and 3'-ends of each molecule can
hybridise to the other, but in such a way that the ends to be joined by
ligation do not hybridise immediately opposite one another. This probe-
target configuration offers increased specificity of detection; but rolling
circle replication of one molecule requires linearisation of the other,
10 preferably within the base-paired region.

Patent specification WO 96/14406 describes enzymatic
synthesis of padlock probes. These probes can also be detected via a
rolling circle mechanism if catenation can be avoided. This can be
achieved if they are first generated with a type IIS restriction enzyme and
15 the 5'-phosphate replaced with a thiophosphate by phosphatase treatment.
followed by kinasing with γ-thiophosphate ATP. In this manner these
probes are also protected from digestion with the same IIS enzyme after
target recognition as described above. Binding of such enzymatically
prepared probes can also be visualised using a linked detection padlock
20 probe as also described above.

According to patent specification WO 97/00446, enhanced
immune detection can be achieved by requiring coincident binding of two or
more affinity probes, for example antibodies, to a target molecule. Upon
target recognition, oligonucleotides bound to the affinity probes are brought
25 close enough to be joined by ligation forming a longer oligonucleotide
which can template an expotential nucleic acid amplification reaction
through PCR or NASBA, etc. In this aspect, the present invention uses a
related approach but employing rolling circle replication of a padlock probe.
Thus the invention provides a method of assaying for a polyepitopic target
30 by providing:-

a)   A first affinity probe for the target which first affinity probe

carries a polynucleotide chain including a first polynucleotide sequence,

b)   A second affinity probe for the target which second affinity probe carries a polynucleotide chain including a terminal second polynucleotide sequence, and

5   c)   A padlock probe having 5'-end and 3'-end sequences which are complementary to the first polynucleotide sequence, and an intermediate sequence which is complementary to a 3'-end of the second polynucleotide sequence,

which method comprises binding the first affinity probe to the
10   target; binding the second affinity probe to the target; hybridising the padlock probe to the first polynucleotide sequence and to the second polynucleotide sequence; circularising the padlock probe; and using the second polynucleotide sequence as a primer to effect rolling circle amplification of the padlock probe.

15   The invention also provides a kit for performing the method, which kit comprises the first and second affinity probes and the padlock probe. Preferably the first affinity probe and the second affinity probe are selected from: polyclonal, monoclonal and single chain antibodies and fragments thereof; receptors, lectins and nucleic acid aptamers.

20   In the method, the first affinity probe and the second affinity probe are incubated with the target, under conditions to cause them to bind to the target. Then the padlock probe is hybridised to the first polynucleotide sequence and is circularised. If the two affinity probes bound to the target are close enough together, then the terminal second
25   polynucleotide sequence of the second affinity probe becomes hybridised to the intermediate sequence of the padlock probe. On addition of a supply of nucleotides and a polymerase enzyme, rolling circle replication of the padlock probe can be effected. Use of a radioactively or otherwise labelled nucleotide provides a correspondingly amplified signal related to the
30   presence or concentration of the polyepitopic target.

The system is illustrated in Figure 3 of the accompanying

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drawings, in which there is shown a polyepitopic target 36, a first antibody
38 for the target which carries a polynucleotide chain 40 including a first
polynucleotide sequence; a second antibody 42 for the target which carries
a polynucleotide chain 44 including a terminal second polynucleotide

5   sequence; and a padlock probe 46 which has hybridised to both
polynucleotide chains and has been circularised. Upon addition of a supply
of nucleotides and a polymerase enzyme, the polynucleotide chain 44 will
act as a primer for rolling circle replication of the padlock probe 46.

Rolling circle products generated by any of the methods

10   described herein can be visualised during synthesis using so called
molecular beacons. (S Tyagi and F R Kramer, 1996, Nature
Biotechnology, 14, 303-308). A molecular beacon is a usually hairpin
shaped oligonucleotide carrying a fluorescing label at one end, and at the
other end a compound that modulates or inhibits the fluorescence.

15   Unfolding the normally hairpin-shaped molecular beacon modulates or
enhances the fluorescence signal in an easily observed way. A molecular
beacon designed to have a sequence corresponding to that of a padlock
probe, can be used to monitor rolling circle replication of the padlock probe.

This system is illustrated in Figure 5 of the accompanying

20   drawings. A padlock probe 52 has been hybridised to a target sequence of
a target nucleic acid 54 and has been circularised. The target nucleic acid
has been cut at 56 and the resulting 3'-end 58 has been chain extended by
a rolling circle replication reaction involving the padlock probe 52. A
molecular beacon 60 has a terminal fluorescent group 62 and a terminal

25   quenching group 64, and an intermediate sequence corresponding to that
of the padlock probe 52. As rolling circle replication takes place,
successive molecules of the molecular beacon become hybridised to the
extending chain at 66 in a conformation which permits enhanced
fluorescence of the fluorescent group.

30   Reference is directed to Figures 6 – 14, which are described
in the following.

Experimental Secti n

Materials and Method

Oligonucleotides synthesised by Interactiva:

5   M13-Fo1s (56 nt) contains 6 phosphorothioates

M13-Fo2 (56 nt) contains no phosphorothioates

M13-Ls1 (23 nt) contains FokI cleavage-site

M13-T3s is used as template

M13-K1 (34 nt) is used as a FokI cleavage adapter.

10

Oligonucleotides synthesised in house using an ABI 394 DNA Synthesiser:

M13c70-rol (70 nt) used as a padlock probe

Primer Mval (21 nt) used for M13 cleavage by Mval.

RvRolcpr (21 nt) used for cleavage of RCR-product by HpaII

15

Labelling:

The probes were 5'-radiolabelled using 30 units T4 polynucleotide kinase (Amersham) in 50 µl 10 mM Tris Ac pH 7.5, 10 mM MgAc$_2$, 50 mM KAc and 30 µCi gamma 32P-ATP (3000 mCi/mMol, NEN

20   Dupont) at 37°C for 10 min, and the oligonucleotides were purified on a Sephadex G-50 µspin column (Pharmacia).

FokI cleavage using oligonucleotides:

Oligonucleotides, one labelled at the time, were mixed and

25   allowed to hybridise by incubating 1 pmol M13-T3S, 2 pmol M13-Fo1s or M13-Fo2 together with 3 pmol M13-Ls1 or M13-K1 in 20 µl 10 mM TrisAc pH 7.5, 10 mM MgAc$_2$, 50 mM KAc, 1 mM ATP, 0.1 µg/µl BSA at 65°C for 10 min and allowed to cool at room temperature for 10 min. FokI was added to a conc of 0.5 units/µl and the reaction was incubated at 37°C for

30   60 min. The enzyme was heat inactivated at 65°C for 20 min and the reaction was allowed to cool to room temp rature for 10 min.

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FokI cleavages of M13 using padlock and FokI-adapter:

0.75 pmol M13mp18+strand (Pharmacia), 0.25 pmol M13c70-Rol (labelled) and 1.5 pmol M13-K1 were mixed and allowed to hybridise as described above. The FokI cleaved was performed as described above.

MvaI cleavages of M13 using padlock and MvaI-primer:

0.75 pmol M13mp18+strand (Pharmacia), 0.25 pmol M13c70-Rol (labelled) and 1.5 pmol MvaI-primer in 20 μl 10 mM TrisAc pH 7.5, 10 mM MgAc$_2$, 50 mM KAc, 1 mM ATP, 0.2 μg/μl BSA was incubated at 65°C for 10 min and allowed to cool at room temperature for 10 min. 2 units MvaI was added and the reaction was incubated at 37°C for 60 min. the enzyme was heat-inactivated at 65°C for 15 min and the reaction was allowed to cool to room temperature for 10 min.

Phi 29 DNA polymerase reaction:

1 μl enzyme reaction was added to 50 mM Tris-HCl pH 7.5, 10 mM MgCl$_2$, 20mM (NH$_4$)$_2$SO$_4$, 1 mM dithiothreitol and 0.2 μg/μl BSA, 0.25 mM dNTP, 5 μCi alpha 32P dCTP (3000 Ci/mmol, NEN Dupont) and 2 ng/μl Phi29 DNA polymerase (provided from Amersham) and incubated at 37°C for 60 min. The enzyme was heat inactivated at 65°C for 20 min.

Cleavages of RCR-product:

1 μl RCR-reaction is added in 10 mM Bis Tris Propane-HCl, 10 mM MgCl$_2$, 1 mM dithiothreitol (pH 7.0) and 1 pmol/μl RvRolcpr and is incubated at 65°C for 10 min and allowed to cool at room temperature for 10 min. 1 units HpaII was added and the reaction was incubated at 37°C overnight. The enzyme was heat inactivated at 65°C for 20 min.

Sequences

M13-Fo1s

CAGCA<u>GGATG</u>TCTTCTAGT$_5$G$_s$C$_s$C$_s$A$_s$A$_s$GCTTGCATGCCTGCAGG

5   TCGACTCTAGAGGAT

M13-Fo2

CAGCA<u>GGATG</u>CCTTCTAGTGCCAAGCTTGCATGCCTGCAGGTCGA

CTCTAGAGGAT

10

M13-Ls1

AGAAGACATCCTG$_s$C$_s$T$_s$G$_s$T$_s$T$_s$T$_s$T$_s$T$_s$T$_s$T$_s$

M13-T3s

15   ATCCTCTAGAGTCGACCTGCAGGCATGCAAGCT↑TGGCACTGGC↑C

GTCGTTTTACCAAACTC$_s$A$_s$A$_s$G$_s$A$_s$A$_s$G$_s$G$_s$A$_s$C$_s$C

M13-K1

CA<u>CATCC</u>GTGCAC<u>GGATG</u>TGGTAAAAC↑GACGGCC

20

M13c70-ro1

TGCCTGCAGGTCGACTTTTTTTTTTATGTTAAGTGACCGGCAGCA

TTTTTTTTTTAGTGCCAAGCTTGCA

25   Primer MvaI

TGGGTAACGCCAGGGTTTTCC

RvRo1cpr

ATGTTAAGTTGACCGGCAGCA

30

Example 1

Strand Specific cleavage by FokI and protection by phosphorothioates (Figure 6).

Enzyme titration. This experiment involves two partially
5   complementary oligonucleotides, 29 and 39 nucleotides in length. Both
.were labelled at the 5' end by kinaseing, adding a 32P residue. In the left
hand set 1 through 8, both oligonucleotides were composed of regular
nucleotides, and addition of the type IIS restriction endonuclease FokI,
resulted in cleavage of both strands. This results in loss of the 29-mer, and
10   gain of a 17-mer fragment. Similarly, the 39-mer is replaced by an 8-mer.
In the right-hand set 1 through 8, the 29-mer contained a phosphorothioate-
residue where the restriction enzyme otherwise would have cleaved. The
experiment shows that phosphorothioate-residues block cleavage of the
modified strand without inhibiting cleavage of the other strand. (This
15   property has not been previously demonstrated for this enzyme, but it is
well established for several type II enzymes, having cleavage sites within
their recognition sequence.)

Example 2

20   **Strand-specific cleavage using FokI followed by Phi29 polymerisation
(Figure 7)**

Here a branched substrate for restriction digestion was used.
The 56-mer is complementary to a 23-mer at its 5'-end and to a
(radiolabelled) 71-mer at its 3' end. The 23-mer includes the recognition
25   sequence of the enzyme FokI, but is cleavage site is located across the
branch. The sample shown in lane 3 is untreated. The sample in lane 1
was treated with the restriction enzyme, generating a shorter fragment of
33. In lane 4 the polymerase Phi29 and nucleotides had been present, with
no consequences, compared to lane 3, as expected. Finally, in lane 2
30   restriction was followed by polymerisation. Only a small fraction of the
cleavage products hav been extended by a few nucleotides to fill in the 5'

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overhang generated by restriction cleavage. The experiment demonstrates
that cleavage across a branch is possible, as has been previously shown
by Szybalski. The reason for the poor polymerisation in this experiment, as
required to initiate a rolling circle replication, is not clear. (The 100 nt
5   fragment is an unintended extension product of the 71-mer.).

Example 3

**Strand-specific cleavage using *FokI* and protection by
phosphorothioates followed by Phi29 polymerisation (Figure 8)**

10   The experiment is similar to the previous one, except that in
this experiment the 56-mer was protected from restriction cleavage by
being modified with phosphorothioates. Lane 3: starting material. Lane 1:
restriction cleaved. Lane 4: Addition of polymerase and nucleotides; most
56-mers remain unchanged (, although some seem to have been extended
15   somehow as mentioned for the above experiment). Lane 2: Here most of
the 33-mer cleavage products have been extended, copying the now
uncleaved 56-mer, just as would be required to initiate a rolling circle
replication by directing a cleavage reaction to the target strand for padlock
recognition, allowing the target to prime a rolling-circle replication reaction.

20

Example 4

**Strand-specific cleavage by *FokI* and protection by
phosphorothioates (Figure 9)**

           A simpler variant of the preceding experiment, but with the
25   56-mer strand 5' labelled with radioactive phosphate. The unprotected
strand is cleaved as expected, but the protected one is cleaved farther
away than normal, where it is unprotected, indicating that a larger
sequence may have to be protected by being modified with
phosphorothioates.

30

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Example 5

Cleavage by *FokI* by using a *FokI*-adapter (Figure 10)

In this experiment an alternative means is used to cleave the
padlock-target strand, in this case downstream of where the probe has

5   bound. An oligonucleotide that includes a self-complementary segment
directs recognition by the restriction enzyme and cleavage where this
adapter hybridises to a target strand. Lane 3: no restriction enzyme.
Lane 1: restriction resulting in a shorter fragment of 43 bases. Lane 4: no
effect by addition of polymerase. Lane 2, some of the 43-mer cleavage

10   product is extended by the polymerase to generate a 56-mer, templated by
the unlabelled 56-mer oligonucleotide.

Example 6

Initiation of rolling circle replication by cleavage of the target strand

15   **(Figure 11)**

In this experiment the external adapter of the previous
experiment was used to cleave the circular single stranded M13 target for
recognition by a padlock probe. Labelling was by incorporation of
radioactive nucleotides, and with a 5'-labelled padlock probe. This

20   experiment as shown here is not conclusive because unligated padlocks
can prime a rolling-circle replication, templated by M13. This is addressed
in the gel shown in Example 8.

Example 7

25   **Initiation of rolling circle replication by cleavage of the target strand**
(Figure 12)

Similar to the preceding experiment except that cleavage of
the target strand took advantage of a resident restriction site which was
rendered double stranded by hybridising an oligonucleotide. Again the two

30   types of polymerised molecules are distinguished in Example 8.

Example 8

Cleavage of rolling circle product with restriction enzyme (Figure 13)

Here the experiments shown in Examples 6 and 7 have been further investigated, to reveal that the polymerase Phi29 can effect a
5 rolling-circle replication of the circularised padlock probes, and that the reaction was primed by the target sequence after the target M13 strand was cleaved using a FokI adapter (Example 6) or the resident recognition sequence for MvaI. Ligase indicates whether the padlock probe has been ligated. RE means either FokI (lanes 1-8) or MvaI (lanes 9-16), used as a
10 means to cleave the target molecule downstream of the site where the padlock probe has bound. All samples were treated with Phi29 polymerase. Products of the extension reaction shown in even-number lanes were treated with the restriction enzyme HpaII in the presence of oligonucleotide RvRo1cpr to cleave the rolling-circle products to
15 monomers. The cleavage allowed identification of polymerisation products that arise by copying of the circularised padlock probe, as opposed to ones templated by the M13 genome. The 70-mer product of the enzyme reaction which is visible in lanes 8 and 16 clearly shows that a rolling circle replication was primed from the target strand by cleaving the M13 molecule
20 that served as target for ligation, downstream of where the padlock probe had bound. This reaction generated copies of the padlock probe.

Figure 14 shows the four oligomers M13-Fo1s (56 nt);
M13-Ls1 (23 nt); M13-K1 (34 nt) and M13-T3s (71 nt) hybridised together.
25 Sites for Fok1 binding and cleavage, and phosphorothioate bonds, are shown together with oligonucleotide lengths.

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CLAIMS

5   1.   A method of detecting a target sequence of a target nucleic
acid which method comprises the steps of:-
    i)   providing a padlock probe for the target sequence,
    ii)   forming a hybrid of the padlock probe with the target nucleic
acid, and circularising the padlock probe,
10 iii)   cutting the target nucleic acid at or near the target sequence,
this step iii) being performed before, during or after step ii), and
    iv)   effecting rolling circle replication of the padlock probe.

    2.   The method of claim 1, wherein step iii) is performed by
15 subjecting the hybrid to restriction thereby cutting the target nucleic acid at
or near the target sequence but without cutting the circularised padlock
probe.

    3.   The method of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein in step iii) the
20 target nucleic acid is cut within the target sequence to provide a primer by
means of which rolling circle replication of the padlock probe is effected in
step iv).

    4. .   The method of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the target nucleic
25 acid is cut downstream of the target sequence following which any non-
basepaired nucleotides are removed by a 3'-exonuclease.

    5.   The method of claim 4, wherein Phi29 is used as a
polymerase enzyme having also 3'-exonuclease activity.

6.   The method of any one of claims 3 to 5, wherein in step iii) restriction is effected by means of a type IIS enzyme.

7.   The method of any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the target nucleic acid is circular.

8.   An oligonucleotide suitable for use as a padlock probe for a target nucleic acid sequence, which oligonucleotide has 5'-end and 3'-end sequences complementary to the target sequence; a first site for recognition by a type IIS enzyme; and a second site where at least one nucleotide residue and/or internucleotide bond is modified to protect the oligonucleotide from restriction by the type IIS enzyme.

9.   The oligonucleotide of claim 8, wherein at least one phosphorothioate internucleotide bond is provided at the second site to protect the oligonucleotide from restriction by the type IIS enzyme.

10.   The oligonucleotide of claim 8 or claim 9, wherein the first site is suitable for recognition by a type IIS enzyme *FokI*.

11.   A method of detecting a target nucleic acid having two non-adjacent target sequences, which method comprises the steps of:
i)   cutting the target nucleic acid so as to create a target nucleic acid fragment having a 5'-end target sequence and a 3'-end target sequence,
ii)   providing a probe having two adjacent sequences complementary to the two target sequences,
iii)   forming a hybrid of the target nucleic acid fragment with the probe, and circularising the target nucleic acid fragment, and
iv)   effecting rolling circle replication of the circularised target nucleic acid fragment.

12.   A method of detecting a target sequence of a target nucleic acid, which method comprises the steps of:-

i)   providing a first padlock probe having 5'-end and 3'-end sequences which are complementary to the target sequence, and an

5   intermediate sequence,

ii)   providing a second padlock probe having 5'-end and 3'-end sequences which are complementary to the intermediate sequence of the first padlock probe,

iii)   forming a hybrid by hybridising the first padlock probe to the

10   target nucleic acid and hybridising the second padlock probe to the first padlock probe, and circularising both padlock probes,

iv)   purifying the hybrid,

v)   subjecting the hybrid to restriction thereby cutting the first padlock probe, and

15   vi)   effecting rolling circle replication of the second padlock probe.

13.   The method of claim 12, wherein in step v) the first padlock probe is cut within the intermediate sequence which has hybridised to the second padlock probe, to provide a primer by means of which rolling circle

20   replication of the second padlock probe is effected in step vi).

14.   The method of claim 12, wherein in step v) the first padlock probe is cut downstream of the intermediate sequence which has hybridised to the second padlock probe, following which any non-

25   basepaired nucleotides are removed by a 3'-exonuclease to provide a primer by means of which rolling circle replication of the second padlock probe is effected in step vi).

15.   The method of claim 14, wherein Phi29 is used as a

30   polymerase enzyme having also 3'-exonuclease activity.

16.   The method of any one of claims 13 to 15, wherein in step v) restriction is effected by means of a type IIS enzyme.

17.   A kit for detecting a target sequence of a target nucleic acid, which kit comprises:-

a)   A first padlock probe having 5'-end and 3'-end sequences which are complementary to the target sequence, and an intermediate sequence,

b)   A second padlock probe having 5'-end and 3'-end sequences which are complementary to the intermediate sequence of the first probe.

18.   A method of assaying for a polyepitopic target by providing:-

a)   A first affinity probe for the target which first affinity probe carries a polynucleotide chain including a first polynucleotide sequence,

b)   A second affinity probe for the target which second affinity probe carries a polynucleotide chain including a terminal second polynucleotide sequence, and

c)   A padlock probe having 5'-end and 3'-end sequences which are complementary to the first polynucleotide sequence, and an intermediate sequence which is complementary to the second polynucleotide sequence,

        which method comprises binding the first affinity probe to the target; binding the second affinity probe to the target; hybridising the padlock probe to the first polynucleotide sequence and to the second polynucleotide sequence; circularising the padlock probe; and using the second polynucleotide sequence as a primer to effect rolling circle amplification of the padlock probe.

19.   A kit for assaying for a polyepitopic target which kit comprises:-

a)   A first affinity probe for the target which first affinity probe carries a polynucleotide chain including a first polynucleotide sequence,

b)   A second affinity probe for the target which second affinity probe carries a polynucleotide chain including a terminal second polynucieotide sequence, and

c)   A padlock probe having 5'-end and 3'-end sequences which are complementary to the first polynucleotide sequence, and an intermediate sequence which is complementary to the second polynucleotide sequence.

20.   The kit of claim 19, wherein the first affinity probe and the second affinity probe are both antibodies.
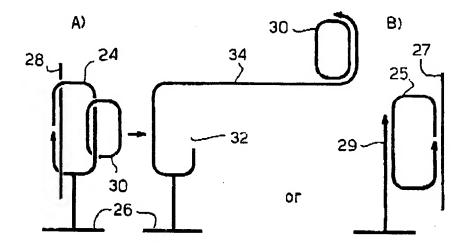
Fig.1.

Fig.2.

Fig.3.

Fig.4.

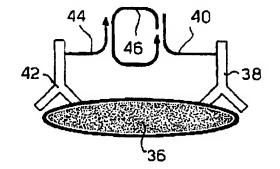## Fig.5.

Fig.6.

FokI
1 0 units
2 0.25
3 0.5
4 1
5 2
6 4
7 8
8 16

Fig.7.

Sample	FokI	Phi29
1	+	−
2	+	+
3	−	−
4	−	+

Fig.8.

Sample	FokI	Phi29
1	+	−
2	+	+
3	−	−
4	−	+

Fig.9.

Sample	FokI
1	+
2	–
3 S	+
4 S	–

Fig.10.

Sample	FokI	Phi29
1	+	−
2	+	+
3	−	−
4	−	+

Fig.11.

Sample	Ligas	FokI	Phi29
1	−	−	−
2	−	−	+
3	+	−	−
4	+	−	+
5	−	+	−
6	−	+	+
7	+	+	−
8	+	+	+

Fig.12.

Sample	Ligas	Mval	Phi29
1	–	–	–
2	–	–	+
3	+	–	–
4	+	–	+
5	–	+	–
6	–	+	+
7	+	+	–
8	+	+	+

Fig.13.

Sample	Ligas	RE	HpaII
1	–	–	–
2	–	–	+
3	+	–	–
4	+	–	+
5	–	+	–
6	–	+	+
7	+	+	–
8	+	+	+
9	–	–	–
10	–	–	+
11	+	–	–
12	+	–	+
13	–	+	–
14	–	+	+
15	+	+	–
16	+	+	+

Fig.14.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 6   C12Q1/68

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 6   C12Q

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched.

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	WO 97 19193 A (UNIV YALE) 29 May 1997 (1997-05-29) see whole doc., esp. claims and figures ---	1-20
A	WO 92 01813 A (SYNGENE INC) 6 February 1992 (1992-02-06) ---	1-20
P,X	BANER J. ET AL.,: "Signal amplification of padlock probes by rolling circle replication" NUCLEIC ACIDS RESEARCH, vol. 26, no. 22, – 15 November 1998 (1998-11-15) pages 5073-5078, XP002112357 cited in the application the whole document -----	1-20

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.   ☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

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"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

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Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
17 August 1999	30/08/1999

Name and mailing address of the ISA	Authorized officer
European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Müller, F

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